Characters

Speaker

Act

Are you as weird as I think you are? Not likely. Disturbed? You hear voices? I'm lucky that way. I'd say, weird I feel connected. Connected to what? To the source of my voices. Okay. That's weird. Are you weird, or am I weird? What's the criteria? Let me invite you — Come a little closer. In what sense? The question is: What can he do with one hand tied behind his back? My secret desire is — win love from many beautiful women. I'll pretend I didn't hear that sentiment. I'm speaking of things closest to my heart.

Notice what's on her wrist. A very beautiful watch. Who do YOU pray to? I don't. What kind of religious ceremony? I don't have any religious observations. God plays no part in your life? Not at all. There is no God in your life? None at all. What a beautiful violin. My God — Do you play it? I scratch out noise. I'll bet you play better than that. I scratch out terrible noises, which I like doing in private. You're saying that just to provoke me. Not at all.

What does your internal time say now? It doesn't speak to me, it manipulates me in other ways — Okay. Imagine a completely different play called "Fingers Alert." What could happen in such a play? Imagine a play called "Dogs on Duty." What could happen in such a play? Did you ever see this in real life? An apple. Remember? Did you ever see this in real life? You just lied to me. I don't lie, I don't tell the truth. I'm here to do neither of those two stupid things. What are you here for? To be slippery on things. Here's what I'm here for. I want to be in a place from which truth — gushes forth. I want to be a place through which truth — passes. But when it passes through me — stripping off its protective cloak — Ah, but why do I wear my protective cloak? Because truth revealed, believe it or not, takes the unfortunate shape of everything that isn't true.

This happens. This really happens. But if mere actors speak this, then it no longer happens. Me too. I want to be a place through which truth passes. Did I get that right? I want to be a place through which truth passes. Turn the page. I'd like to linger a bit longer over this very particular page. Turn the page. What does it say on this page? Wait a minute — That's my line. What does it say on this page? Eat me. Please? By the way, do *I* consider you a place through which truth passes? You'll never know because you can't get inside my head. Let's make a guess — What's a guess? Somebody should write this down so I don't forget.

Jesus Christ, this is the most interesting thought I've had in a long time. What's a guess? Do you think I can make this lady disappear? I do hope somebody gets hurt. Why? Do you know the name of every book in your oh-so-extensive library? I believe I do. I doubt it. Close your eyes. Then feel your way to the bookcase. Take out a book without looking. As you can clearly see — Where? I already wrote the name of the book I predicted you'd pick, and sealed my guess in a white envelope. It's titled — you're not going to believe this. Oh, I believe it. "Dossier of Fear." I have no such book in my entire library. Look again

You're quite right. The book is entitled "Dossier of Fear." But I'm convinced that heretofore I had no such book. Its pages are all blank pages. I could have secretly hidden that book in your collection. Isn't that possible? Would you do that? Well, imagine a play entitled "Broken Promises." Welcome. Let me tell you a story in the center of which I hide a very personal message. Excuse me but — how will we be able to recognize such a private message? Well . . . Imagine a play. . . . There might be enough time here to explain something. What? Did you ever heretofore explode? Is this called talking to myself? Try using my real name. I don't think names are a real issue, vis-à-vis a man who wants to genuinely explode. On the verge? Hey, why not take me up on that? When stones are shoes, the bottoms of the feet go deaf.

Do I have your permission, at least, to get torn to pieces by contradictory forces? Of course you have my

permission. I was hoping you'd offer me a handkerchief. Why of all things a handkerchief? Can't you guess? A handkerchief to stop the bleeding. From which wound? Some of them can't be reached. So I'll have to try this one conveniently here in the palm of my hand. That's a very, very old wound. I was hoping you'd offer me a coat. Ah, hearts of ice. You remembered. I remember nothing, I just go with the flow — Thank you. For what? I'm thrilled to be included. In what? Have a seat.

I already did. It must be that something powerful happened to me. I heard this very desirable woman say out loud to me, "I already did." But I already do. Vis-à-vis, you know — chairs. I wanted those words to be magically invested with something powerful enough to throw me to the floor. I did. I tried to make it happen. I did. Let's just say — time doesn't exist for me. Wrong. But that should work — Why should it work if it's wrong? Unless, the key is more interesting than the lock? No problem. Here's another way to look at it. What is a human being except that which "doesn't know." Animals, for instance — zebras, lions, buffalo, and more ordinary things like dogs and cats. None of those animal things are in a state of not-knowing, because the issue never arises. So a human being is the birth of not-knowing as a real possibility. And when that beneficent stupidity is ended, then in fact he, or she, is no longer a human being.

You're into something I'm just not into. That seems to quiet him down to a considerable extent. I wondered who was going to be the first to say something. *(Pause)* What do you know, it was me. You almost said something important, but it wasn't you. Didn't I speak first? No. Who did? I'll have to go into the next room, but — I think if you go I go. Really? Yes. What time is it? My watch stopped. Think about this. If God himself were to come into this room right now, it would mean time had indeed stopped. God? I'm not interested. You have to be interested.

That's desperation on your part. Not on my part. Not on my part. Now, if God, really — Oh — that's vulgar, and so pretentious, it's doubly vulgar. I'm very naive. Primitive. Proud of it. What? Both. Better sit in this. Why. It's a very electric chair. I don't want to be electrocuted. I don't want to be electrocuted either. Do you see wires? You like my company, admit it. True, you like the aggravation. It energizes. I like that, but I don't like its source, I like its results.

It's the same thing. It's the same thing. Pleasant dreams. I need lots of sleep. No problem — it's as if a curtain were rising. Imagine a play called "The Pretend Hat." What could happen — I'm imagining a play called "Mysteries of Arrogance." That's more my style. Guess. What's a guess? Time will tell. Quite Counting on internal time? I turn into somebody who opens his mouth, and whatever comes out travels in desirable directions only. Automatic truths. Good. What's the technique? Well, I make up rhymes. Then what? The technique is, they don't rhyme.

Really! This is supposed to illustrate something. Ah, your method is the illustrative method. Yes. You make up rhymes that don't rhyme. Not quite. I make up rhymes. I do that. But: they don't rhyme. I appreciate the difference. Do you? Here is my hat. What do you think of that. That rhymes. Oh. I thought perhaps you'd say to me, "That doesn't rhyme." But it does. "Here is my hat. What do you think of that." Wait a minute. Does that rhyme? We'll have to find out. How? Over the course of time. How many people really attend your lecture courses?

Look — It varies. Sure. Sure. But in general, how many? Not many. Come on, how many? Sometimes one. Sometimes two, or three. You know the esteem in which I hold you. Yeah. Therefore the fact that your lectures are not well attended does not, in my eyes, reflect upon you in the least, but rather upon your students. You mean, on the ones not totally present? Possibly those also. But of course — you have no way to know — the quality of those who do attend with regularity. No. I invite you, Professor. That's impossible — My feeling is, the universe uses me as it will.

(He falls)

Did I just rhyme?

It's hard to know, but I think it rhymed with something. I don't think so. In a certain play entitled "My Head Was a Sledgehammer," a certain character falls deeply in love with his mirror image, although his mirror image doesn't resemble him in many important ways. But is a much more beautiful image. A magic mirror, and the character who has so fallen in love says things that seem beside the point, not expressing love really, but do they? Do they what? Do they win him the love of women? Women in general? Be more specific. You see what's happening to me? I've been placed in a situation where verbal disorganization — while it does not rule — has been dreamed of deeply by certain individuals who vibrate on the edge of an aura that does divide a particular arena into those who are beautiful and those who are simply pieces of shit. Isn't that a false distinction? No longer true. Look at me — Once again the goddamned philosophers have undone me. Does this implicate every single one of them?

Correct. Every single one of you has cheated me out of my appropriate energies. Which of those sons of bitches have done this to you? I don't know individual names. Uh-uh! The truth? I want it to pour forth abundantly. What stops you. Can truth travel between two people? I think not. How come? This I can explain. But don't confuse, please, my explanation with the truth — Explain! If the truth is the truth about something — — But it has to be about something. But: that thing it's the truth about eats it. And the truth, eaten, disappears by turning into whatever it is that eats it. In order to clarify this, I shall now tear to pieces an important envelope, within which —

(Pause)

I forgot what was in the envelope. But that's okay — because it illustrates my real and most secret import. I don't know how to say this. But what you just did really turns me on.

Not really? Really. You're not lying to me? Truth is — I'm not lying. How could I possibly know who's lying? That must be me. Why did you make me do this? I don't know of course. Intuition? I can't say it was intuition. What can you say about what you've been doing since you came into this room? Theorize about it? Spare me — I'm afraid there's no other option. Close your eyes. What a shame you haven't produced the desirable egg. And your heart, which was never whole, breaks — What effect is this having on you? Remarkable enough, it brings tears to my eyes. Genuine magic?

No tears visible. He makes you believe in them simply by his tone of voice. Are you threatening to saw me in half? She doesn't know how to do that without hurting you. Try hurting me. Go ahead, twist something.

(Done)

Now I'm feeling a little pain. Though it would be more poignant doing this in public. What am I able to perceive, even through tears of pain? Bypass the tears, move to the ears. What's happening? It hasn't happened, so that's why it's still interesting. What is? Well, you've been crying. Nobody noticed — Don't believe him. He was crying real tears. That's what I thought — Don't believe it. My next trick? This book disappears. Was the drawer empty? Careful. I make things appear out of nothing. Bravo!

Thank you. Now, tell me, why do you prefer the disappearing act to the opposite? That takes some explaining — Both kneel for this. Unnecessary. I assume you both kneel for this, more than once, please. Perhaps I have been waiting to enter this very arena. Should I repeat myself? Does she mean repeating myself even when I don't remember? Everybody out of this room, please. What did I say? If I say everybody — am I included? Do it immediately, please. Now that I can't see anybody because they left the room, I can't see anybody, because they left the room. Amazing. Your reality is my own reality. If that's true —? A particular friend helped me out of an impasse.

How? He, or she, blocked all my escape routes. But was it a he or a she? I can't possibly remember. The truth — That's what I meant from the beginning. I can't remember. What changed the minute I left the room. Tell me what's radically different. It always happens like this. As soon as someone asks me, What's radically different?, if I fail to notice what's radically different, I find myself in very deep shit. I find myself in very deep shit. Finally, somebody noticed. What was noticed? I bought new shoes. Or — at least one. The one thing I failed to notice was an individual shoe. I think we're both in deep shit. Dizzy? Me too. This is too much. The angel who dominated my life turns human, but do I believe it?

I bought new shoes, that's all. Why? Why, of all possibilities —? Simple. To get back down to earth. Run that by me again. Careful — When I pick up speed, I pick up more than speed. Does it really look like I'm about to gravitate toward whatever pulls me in directions I'm totally incapable of traveling? The only thing I can come up with — Somebody must have had God in mind — remember him? — when he went down on his hands and knees in front of me. That was last night. But here we have a whole new beginning. I don't see the difference. Here's the difference. Right again, the effect is totally different. Continue, please. Well, the word that comes to mind immediately is "literature." Stop groping for respectability. I was doing the opposite. If I say "literature," that's like saying "shit." Whereas if I started rolling my tongue over an objective word like — science? Well,

that's sweet enough to plunge somebody like me into those nether regions where pigs do fly. Strange, to me science has no particular aroma. *(Kicked)* Why did you do that? Figure it out, my friend. I'm your friend no longer. No longer the friend of science? I must have fallen prey to the unenviable error of being reticent when it comes to putting my best foot forward. Maybe it's time to try genuine role reversal? Just as an experiment? Look at it this way. If it's an experiment, we can pretend nobody really gets hurt. Inconclusive. This is inconclusive. As a matter of fact, this is inconclusive. But it still counts. Because our agreement is — It's inconclusive. That reminds me — What? Am I being asked to invent something?

(Bread strapped to the feet, making bread shoes)

You're not going to believe this. Try me.

This might not be an appropriate moment, but I'm really hungry. What are you trying to tell me? How do I know? Then how can I share your experience? Oh, I don't see how it can be avoided. It's being avoided. Let me show you something. What? You decide. I choose not to see this. Ahh — I choose not to see this thing. I don't imagine this bread appeals to you. Of course not. It's much too long. But. Here's the thing — shorten it. How? Use a knife. You do that, please. With a genuine knife?

With a knife. Ah, with a genuine knife? I said with a knife, because what I intended, was a knife.

(One enters on cothurni)

Why do you walk that way? When you get old, that's what it feels like. So get used to it Because that's what it's going to feel like, when your head pivots in the direction of all desirable ladies, and you wobble. And if you don't get ready for that, you're going to be very, very unhappy. Ohhh! Very unhappy! See what happens? Time passes through unchartable waters. Language proliferates just so things can be said nobody ever intended, then, they come true. I want to see this. I speak. It comes true. How? Pure speed. Speed?

Jumping fast over every new consideration. Bang! And beyond that — nothing. Getting there really fast. Then, nothing That sounds like skipping even, life itself. Right, everything so fast, life is skipped. Right. What's achieved if life is simply skipped? Nothing has to be achieved. That's the beauty of it. Everything skipped? Then one arrives at nothing. Why is that desirable? I didn't say it was desirable. What is it, if it isn't desirable? Necessary, that's all. Necessary for what? I don't know. You, you don't know. She doesn't know — Then slow down. Enjoy the ride at least. Why do you suppose it is that whenever I remember you, you seem

very uncomfortable, while I, after all is said and done, seem perfectly comfortable. Suppose I left, forever. You'd be bored. You'd be all alone. It wouldn't matter.

If you were all alone, that would matter. Oh no it wouldn't. It wouldn't even be part of my life. Because life — that's not where it's happening. You think it's happening in life: you're wrong. Well, for instance . . . what other place could it be happening? No, it's not happening someplace else. It's happening right here. But it's not happening in life. Where is "here," that isn't in life, please? — and if it's not it's someplace else? Well, why don't we just shut up and admit I'm right? But that means — give up total power over my own mind. Okay. That means powerlessness. Maybe that's the point. Somebody's mind is a total blank. Ah, isn't that the point? What? What is this? Among myriad possibilities, I don't know to what you refer. This is an idea that is not allowed to come into existence. Its power as an idea is not thereby minimized. It still exerts power. What idea is that? This is an idea that doesn't exist. It makes the walls of this room vibrate. And failing to do so, something else writes on my forehead, letter of invisible fire.

What I don't see is the fire. It's invisible fire. Sorry — If it's invisible, it's not in life. And if it's not in life, I'm not interested, because I'm here in life. So what interests me is here, where I am. Hey, that's silly. Why. Because what's interesting is what's there — where you are. Here I am! But — That you don't know. Don't know what? Where you are. Ah, but even if I don't know about it, that's still here in life. Hello again. Once again, very silly. Do better than that. Okay. That's unalterably SILLY. Because the most interesting thing about anybody in this room is where you are. That part of where you are that isn't where you think you are. Does that rhyme? That's silly.

That rhymes. That's so silly. Now that's REALLY silly — Then again, if you really think that's silly —? Better think it through again! From the beginning! One more time! One more time! One more time!

THE END